A

LETTER

From a **Dissenter** to his Friend of the same **Persuasion.** Being a Perswasive to a **Coalition** for the better **Establishment** of the **Protestant Religion** in **England.**

Licensed and Entred according to Act of Parliament.

APeer the long severe Storm which has been rais'd against the Reform'd Religion, me thinks all true Lovers of the same, should Unite their Pious Endeavours to procure that happy Calm, which at this Conjuncture we need not despair to enjoy.

Now among the means probably conducing to this End, You may safely reckon the Disbanding all the Pique and Prejudices, and the Burial of such Names, as have hitherto hinder'd our Tranquillity, by hindering our Coalition, or being made one Body with the Church of *England.* A thing which every good Protestant ought to promote, and to which he is not only invited by the Dangers to which our Separation doth unavoidably expose us, but by the great Hopes of that Christian Coalition which the Juncture affords.

And unless Prejudice, that unlucky impediment of informing our selves aright, be still a Vail upon our Minds, we cannot but see the many happy steps made already towards a desireable Coalition.

For first, You well know Sir, that the great pretences of our Non-Conformity, and Separation from the Church of *England,* are taken out of the way. And that we have no longer any Reason to make use of that popular Topick, I mean the Popishness of her Clergy and Offices.

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As to her Clergy, their Behaviour and Conduct in these Times of Difficulty and Tryal, have sufficiently clear'd them from the imputation of Popishness, or being popishly affected. For rather than they would betray the least inclination to that which is properly to be called Popery, or give the least advantage to the same, They have chosen to venture the loss of their Liberty and Livelihoods; and what they account more dear, even the loss of their Princes Favour. And if any have Warp'd, or Shrunk in this Tryal, they are such as went out from us, and were never rightly of them. And as it would be highly unjust, so it would be altogether unkind, any more to lay Popery to their Charge, who have by so many Christian Methods, appeared against it. So that this old stumbling-block of Popishness in the Clergy of the Church of England, being taken out of the way, there is in my Judgment, removed one of the greatest hinderances of our Coalition.

And e're I leave this Intimation: permit me to put you in mind, to whom we are indebted for those Excellent Confutations of Popery, the four last years have produced. I am sure your Pen and mine have lain Fallow, and of those many of our Party, who heretofore have spoke and writ so much against the Whore of *Babylon*, not one has at this needful Season, dropt a Line, or utter'd a Word in publick against her. But the Discoveries and Confutations of the Errours, Superstitions, Idolatries, and Tyrannies of the Church of Rome, are all to be ascribed to the Genuine Sons of the Church of England. And let me add, That they have so well managed the Cause, that I wonder any thinking Persons of the Church of Rome, can any longer tarry in her Communion, if they have impartially read and consider'd what has of late been writ against it.

The next thing which we have long Objected against our Conforming to the Church of England, is the Popishness of her Offices: from which heavy Charge, nothing can either more compendiously, or more plainly acquit her, than our comparing the Offices used in our Churches, with those that are used in Mass-Houses. For since the Popish Priests have been so unwarry as to shew their Religion, those of our party, who have yielded so far to Curiosity, as to go to see it, cannot but abundantly satisfy themselves, that the Offices used in our Churches

ches are as different from those used in the Mass-Houses, as a decent and Edifying Solemnity is from an insipid and Gaudy Pageantry.

But if all this move you not to a Coalition, but that you are still restif upon the Account of some Things required from you, as Terms of Communion, and which you cannot so well digest: Then let me put you in mind of the Advances the Bishops of the Church of England have made towards an happy adjustment of this Objection.

The Bishops you know, have been the only Order of Men in the Land, of whose Lordly stiffness we have been most afraid. And yet I appeal to your own Judicious Observation, if ever Men appear'd better Champions for the Protestant Religion, or expressed a more Christian Temper toward Protestant Dissenters.

I will remember you but of three Instances, and to leave you to your own Lengths.

The first instance is that of the Bishops Petition to the King, in which they promise a tenderness to Dissenters, and a readiness to exercise the same, when these are requisite circumstances to make it of moment and significancy to them.

Another instance of the Bishops tender regard to Protestant Dissenters, is to be seen in the two Articles Recommended by the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury to the Bishops within his Metropolitan Jurisdiction, and by them recommended to their Diocesan Clergy. I will set them down in their own Apostolical stile.

That they viz. The Clergy walk in wisdom towards those that are not of our Communion: And if there be in any of their Parishes any such, that they neglect not frequently to Confer with them in the spirit of Meekness. Seeking by all good ways and Means, to Gain and win them over to our Communion; more especially that they have a very tender regard to our Brethren the Protestant Dissenters; that upon Occasion offer'd they visit them at their Houses; and receive them kindly at their own, and Treat them fairly wherever they meet them, discoursing Calmly and Civilly with them; perswading them (if it may be) to a full Complyance with Our Church; or at least, that, wherein we have already attain'd, we may all walk by the same Rule, and mind the same Thing. And in order hereunto that they take all Opportunities of assuring and convincing them, That the Bishops of this Church are Really and Sincerely irreconcileable Enemies to the Errors and Superstitions, Idolatries and

and Tyranny of the Church of Rome, and that the very Unkind Jealousies which some have had of Us to the contrary were altogether groundless.

And in the last place that they warmly and most Affectionately Exhort them, to joyn with us in daily fervent Prayer to the God of Peace, for an Universal Blessed Union of all Reformed Churches, both at home and abroad, against our Common Enemies, and that all they that do confess the Holy Name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the Truth of His Holy Word may also meet in one Holy Communion, and live in perfect Unity and Godly Love.

The last Instance I shall mention of the Fatherly Regard the Bishops bear towards Protestant Dissenters, is to be met with in their remonstrance to the King, where They Christianly insinuate their Desire, that a due Liberty of Conscience may be Established by a fair and Free Parliament, and that all Grievances may be Redress'd, and matters in Church and State settl'd upon just and solid Foundations. Which is the sum of all You and I can hope or wish for.

These things I hope, Sir, you will maturely consider and not grumble to make some Advances toward them, who have made so many towards you. I am heartily perswaded the Bishops are Real, and will not faulter in one title they have said. And if we are not wanting to our selves, I doubt not, but that both you and I, and all Protestant Dissenters, shall reap the Benefit of their Pious Endeavours. And that they will be better than their word when they have the happy season for so doing.

And as Things now stand, nothing can hinder our Coalition with the Church of England, but either our own ill Temper, or the Craftiness of our Enemies: What I now write is designed to Correct the former; and if I obtain, the latter is at an End. For if all the Protestants in this Nation Embrace the Advantages (the Juncture seems to promise) of uniting in one Communion, we may bid defiance to Devil and Jesuit, to Hell and Rome.

SIR,

Jan. 5. 1688.

Your Faithful Friend

N. N.

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